



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

## FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## **NOAA is Seeking Comments to the Proposed Rule for Modifications to the Gulf of Mexico Gray Triggerfish Rebuilding Plan**

NOAA Fisheries is seeking public comment the proposed rule implementing Amendment 37 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Reef Fish Resources of the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Council) submitted Amendment 37 to NOAA Fisheries for review, approval, and implementation.

### **Purpose of the Amendment 37**

Gray triggerfish is overfished (population abundance is too low) and undergoing overfishing (rate of removal too high). The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Magnuson-Stevens Act) requires that overfished stocks be rebuilt and that overfishing be halted. Therefore, the primary purpose of Amendment 37 and its proposed rule is to end overfishing of gray triggerfish and allow the stock to rebuild to healthy levels.

### **Annual Catch Limits and Annual Catch Targets**

The commercial allocation is 21 percent and the recreational allocation is 79 percent of the annual catch limit. Until a future stock assessment is completed or the annual catch limit is exceeded, the commercial annual catch limit and annual catch target will be 64,100 pounds and 60,900 pounds, respectively. The recreational annual catch limit and annual catch target will be 241,200 pounds and 217,100 pounds, respectively.

### **Commercial Management Measures**

This proposed rule would establish a commercial sector trip limit of 12 fish per trip throughout the fishing year, and establish a seasonal closure to the

harvest of gray triggerfish from June 1 through July 31. Implementing a trip limit and closed season is expected to allow a longer fishing season for the commercial sector.

### **Recreational Management Measures**

This proposed rule would establish a recreational daily bag limit of 2-fish per angler within the 20-fish reef fish aggregate bag limit, and establish a seasonal closure to the harvest of gray triggerfish from June 1 through July 31. Implementing a bag limit and closed season is expected to allow a longer fishing season for the recreational sector.

### **Recreational Accountability Measures**

The proposed rule would replace the current post-season accountability measure with an in-season closure authority based upon the recreational annual catch target and establish an overage adjustment to reduce the gray triggerfish annual catch limit and annual catch target by the amount of the overage. This overage adjustment would apply if gray triggerfish is overfished.

### **Request for Comments**

Written comments on the amendment must be received no later than March 15, 2013, to be considered by NOAA Fisheries. All comments received by NOAA Fisheries will be addressed in the final rule. Electronic copies of the proposed rule may be obtained from the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Web site at <http://www.gulfcouncil.org>.

## How to Submit Comments

You may submit comments on this document, identified by "NOAA-NMFS-2012-0199", by any of the following methods:

- **Electronic Submission:** Submit all electronic public comments via the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal. Go to [www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2012-0199](http://www.regulations.gov/#!docketDetail;D=NOAA-NMFS-2012-0199), click the "Comment Now!" icon, complete the required fields, and enter or attach your comments. NOAA Fisheries will accept anonymous comments (enter "N/A" in the required fields if you wish to remain anonymous). You can also attach additional files (up to 10MB) in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.
- **Mail:** Submit written comments to Richard Malinowski, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701.

Comments sent by any other method, to any other address or individual, or received after the end of the comment period, may not be considered by NOAA Fisheries. All comments received are a part of the public record and will generally be posted for public viewing on [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) without change. All personal identifying information (e.g., name, address, etc.), confidential business information, or otherwise sensitive information submitted voluntarily by the sender will be publicly accessible.

All comments received, whether on the amendment or the proposed rule, will be considered by NOAA Fisheries in its decision to approve the amendment and publish a final rule. All comments received will be addressed in the final rule.